
DE News



May 4, 2001 - Iowa Department of Education - Ted Stilwill, Director

From the Director's desk:

- ***Budget update***
- ***Teacher quality policy***
- ***Teacher quality funding***
- ***Alternative licensure passed***

Our budget status remains in limbo, with changes coming day-to-day if not hour-to-hour. Final action has been delayed a few more days, as the legislature will be back next week to complete debate on several key bills – notably, our budgets and teacher quality policy and funding.

The best update we have at this time includes:

- The FY02 education budget, SF 535, has passed both chambers; however, a senator has filed a motion to reconsider the vote, which means it hasn't been officially sent to the governor yet. It is anticipated that the Governor will negotiate several possible changes in the budget before the bill goes down for his signature. One of the most dramatic budget reductions in this bill hits community colleges. Their funding has been reduced by \$4.8 million from the current FY01 level, a move that is sure to mean both fewer class options AND higher tuition rates for students. Other programs are eliminated including JAG, Americorp and Family Resource Centers.
- Most of our K-12 funding (outside of the state aid funding) is in HF 755, the standing appropriations bill, which was passed by the House today and now must be debated by the Senate. This bill reduces class size, K-12 technology, Phase III, early childhood and AEA funding.

- Combined, our funding reductions from both bills look to be in line with our summary from last week:

--Early childhood	-\$1.0
--Nonpublic transportation	-\$0.5
--Education excellence	-\$2.0
--School technology	-\$20.0
--Class size/early interv.	no increase
--AEAs	-\$7.5
--Community colleges	-\$4.8
--Work study	-\$2.5
--Dept. of Ed. Administration	-\$0.4

Teacher quality policy to House

SF 476, the student achievement/teacher quality legislation, passed the Senate earlier this week and is ready for House debate. The teacher quality funding is part of a separate bill (see below).

As passed, the bill includes many of the essential elements agreed to earlier: mentoring and induction programs, career paths with higher salary minimums, career development incentives, and variable pay incentives. It also establishes the Iowa Teaching Standards which will provide the framework for evaluation criteria and professional development. We expect that there will be an amendment in the House that might be more acceptable to many educators.

Again, if there is no funding for improving teacher salaries, implementation of this new policy may not be particularly well received.

Teacher quality funding questionable

The funding for teacher quality, HF 413, has yet to be debated by either chamber. The bill itself calls for \$40 million, but the legislative leadership recommendation remains only \$8 million. The governor continues to express strong support for full funding at the \$40 million level. HF 413 teacher funding

Alternative licensure passed

Both chambers have passed HF 670, legislation authorizing alternative licensure for educators; however one of the Senators has filed a motion to reconsider the vote, which means it also hasn't been officially sent to the Governor yet.

Although alternative licensure hasn't received the kind of study and evaluation we'd normally like to see, I do believe this legislation would be preferable to anything we've seen so far. Key points of the bill as passed include:

- Persons must have a bachelor's degree plus at least five years of professional experience before qualifying for the teacher alternative licensure program.
- Our teacher prep institutions, local school districts employing the individual, the State Board of Education, and the State Board of Educational Examiners will provide oversight, which protects the integrity of the program.
- Participants must complete two twelve-hours course of study of instruction PLUS a one-year internship and a two-year mentoring program. The second twelve-hour course of study may be waived based upon the individual's performance.
- Participants seeking a nontraditional administrators license must meet all the same minimum requirements PLUS show an advanced degree and complete two-twelve hour courses of study in educational management, governance organization and planning.

- Nontraditional administrator licenses would be limited to superintendents in districts with at least 5,500 students.

Budget Guarantee – Reorganization Incentives

The budget guarantee bill is on its way to the Governor. The bill contains both a 100% and 101% guarantee, reorganization incentives, regional academies, and on-time funding.

This bill put the 100% budget guarantee in place for the next three school years. In the fourth year, districts can choose between 101% guarantee of the *actual* district budget or a percentage of their budget from the previous year. Over 10 years the choice of a percentage of the previous year's budget will decline by 10% per year.

This bill also provides property tax and whole grade sharing incentives for districts reorganizing on or after July 1, 2002. The bill provides an incentive for regional academies by allowing the host district to count its students for a .10 weighting. Finally, the bill permits a local school board to approve 100% of the needed on-time funding. There will no longer be the need to go to the SBRC for approval of on-time funding.

Conclusion

Our budget outlook remains bleak: dramatically reduced funding for many services throughout K-12 as well as community colleges, AND very little or no funding for increasing teacher salaries. We are still hopeful that, at least to some degree, some of these funds could be restored and that funds might still be available to assist in improving teacher compensation. Establishing new policy for teacher compensation and evaluation without funds to improve salaries seems problematic.

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